

Summary of the Government's reforms to the Blue Badge scheme

Ensuring fair allocation of badges

1. The following measures will be implemented to help ensure that badges are issued fairly against a background of rising demand and that the scheme remains sustainable in the long term for those disabled people who rely on it in the most:

| Reform measure | Earliest delivery¹ |
|---|---|
| Transfer control of current NHS spend on badge eligibility assessments to local authorities | Completed April 2011 |
| Publication of non statutory guidance on scheme administration and enforcement | Completed June 2011 |
| Amend legislation to require wider use of independent mobility assessments to determine eligibility, including where previously that assessment was carried out by a GP | Completed April 2012 |
| Extend eligibility to more disabled children under 3 with specific medical conditions | Completed June 2011 |
| Provide continuous automatic entitlement to severely disabled service personnel and veterans with specific tariffs of award under the Armed Forces Compensation scheme | Completed June 2011 |
| Amend residency requirements for disabled Armed Forces personnel and their families posted overseas on UK bases, so that they can apply for a badge | Dependant on primary legislation: 2013/14 |
| Further research to inform a decision on whether or not to extend eligibility to people with a severe temporary disability (lasting at least one year) | Completed Decision taken not to extend scheme May 2012 |

Delivering efficiency savings and improving customer services

2. The following measures will be implemented to help local authorities improve service delivery and achieve efficiency savings, and to improve customer services for badge holders:

| Reform measure | Earliest delivery |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Establish with local authorities the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) that will deliver operational efficiency savings. This project will be self-funding and should deliver efficiency savings of between £6.5 and £20 million per year. This project will improve customer services and establish an on-line application facility. It should result in faster, more automatic renewals for people whose circumstances do not change between renewal periods | Completed January 2012 |

¹ Delivery of many of the measures are subject to primary or secondary legislation and may change as a result of factors such as the availability of Parliamentary time

Improved and effective prevention of abuse and enforcement

3. The following measures will be implemented to help prevent abuse from happening in the first place and to deal with rising levels of fraud and abuse:

| Reform measure | Earliest delivery |
|--|---|
| Introduce a new badge design that is harder to copy, forge and alter. Implement (via the Blue Badge Improvement Service) new arrangements for printing and distribution to prevent fraud and effectively monitor cancelled, lost and stolen badges | Completed For badges valid from 1 January 2012 |
| The Blue Badge Improvement Service will enable local authorities to detect abuse more effectively. Officers will be able to check details of new badges issued anywhere in England. | Completed March 2012 |
| <p>Introduce new or amended powers for local authorities to tackle abuse and fraud. In particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend the grounds available to local authorities to refuse to issue and to withdraw badges • provide local authorities with a power to cancel badges that have been lost, stolen, have expired, or have been withdrawn for mis-use • provide local authority authorised officers with a power to recover, on-the-spot, badges that have been cancelled or misused • amend existing legislation to clarify wrongful use of a badge and the powers to inspect badges | <p>Completed December 2011</p> <p>Dependant on primary legislation:</p> <p>2013/14</p> <p>2013/14</p> <p>2013/14</p> |

The Badge fee

4. The following measure will be implemented to enable local authorities to cover administrative costs more appropriately and to enable the delivery of the new badge design:

| Reform measure | Earliest delivery |
|--|--|
| Change legislation to raise the maximum fee that local authorities can charge for a badge from £2 to £10. This will pay for the new badge design and enable the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS). Badge holders should, in return, benefit from improved accessibility as abuse is reduced. | Completed For badges valid from 1 January 2012 |